



20

TOUR OF EXCELLENCE

MAP artists and coaches return to Wyoming

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The Montana Arts Council's Tour of Excellence departed from Helena Sept. 7 with a busload of 40 MAP (Montana Artrepreneur Program) artists and coaches and headed for a weekend of learning at the Western Design Conference in Jackson, WY.

The Western Design Conference holds a reputation as a preeminent exhibition and sale of museum-quality art in the spirit of western design. Each year artists from across the nation vie for inclusion in the show, which awards more than \$22,000 in cash prizes to winners in 20 categories. The conference brings together artists, scholars, collectors, interior designers, architects, fashion designers and the general public.

Artists on the tour also had the time to interact with the more than 30 galleries in Jackson, in addition to gallery stops in Ennis and West Yellowstone. The purpose of the gallery visits was to analyze and learn how to approach galleries in the most appropriate way for the artist.

A number of artists made preliminary contacts with galleries, while others used the experience to learn more about placing their art and how that knowledge fits

in the scope of their own strategic plans for the future.

In addition to the Tour of Excellence, the work of 30 MAP artists was selected to show in the Montana Artists' Booth at the Western Design Conference. Although artists weren't required to be present in the booth, collectors, galleries, and the buying public viewed their work over the weekend of the show, which ran from Sept. 7-9.

Two MCAM artists, Al Chandler Goodstrike of Hays and Diane Scalse of Big Sandy, each had one piece of their artwork entered in the juried pedestal competition. Goodstrike's traditionally



Homeward bound: Tour of Excellence participants gather for trip back to Montana.



Cathy Toot, Olive Parker and Wendy Marquis admire Parker's winning pedestal (above).

Guidebook helps artists find business insurance

CERF+ (Craft Emergency Relief Fund + Artists' Emergency Resources) puts the essential information about business insurance at your fingertips (and in your shirt pocket), with its new *Business Insurance Guidebook for Artists*.

A Studio Protector publication by CERF+, this pocket-sized booklet contains the essential information artists need to assess their business insurance needs and to purchase a business insurance policy for their studios, all in easy-to-follow checklists and tips.

It is available for \$3 including postage from the CERF+ store (store.craftemergency.org), or may be downloaded for free as a printable pdf. The booklets are also available in bulk at a reduced price, for workshops or distribution to groups.

More insurance resources are in the Safeguarding section of the Studio Protector Online Guide at studioprotector.org – just click on "Getting Insurance" at the top of the home page.

painted rawhide trunk received the Sonny Tuttle Heritage Spirit Award.

In addition, two MAP artists from the Bitterroot Village, Georgine Forgatch and Olive Parker (both of Stevensville), entered pedestals in the competition, with Parker winning the People's Choice Award for her leather and sapphire jewelry.

The Tour of Excellence and the Artist Launch are part of a three-pronged approach that MAC is taking to help Montana's visual artists build a sustainable life in the arts. This initiative includes the MAP system of teaching regional groups of emerging visual artists about entrepreneurship so that they can become market-ready certified, teaching qualified artists to become certified MAP coaches in order to deliver learning opportunities to more Montanans, and developing wider markets for artists both within and outside the state's borders.

Participants in both the tour and the launch were chosen on the basis of their participation in the Montana Arts Council's MAP program. Both opportunities were funded through grants from LINC (Leveraging Investments in Creativity) and the USDA.

For more about the MAP program, go to www.art.mt.gov or contact MAC Folk Arts and Market Development Specialist Cindy Kittredge at mtcreativearts@gmail.com.



Richard Peters and Michael Blessing assembling display furniture (above), and a section of the Montana Artists' Booth (below).



Buyers explore the Montana Artists' Booth at the Western Design Conference.



Artisan opportunities abound at Made in Montana Marketplace

Online registration for the 111 exhibitor booths in the 2013 Made in Montana Marketplace, as well as registration for wholesale buyers, is now open. Registration for both exhibitors and buyers closes on Feb. 15.

The City of Great Falls and the Montana Department of Commerce will present the annual two-day trade show March 22-23 at the Mansfield Convention Center for producers registered with the Made in Montana program. The purpose of the show is to connect wholesale buyers from across the region with producers of products made in Montana.

Exhibitors pitch their products exclusively to wholesale buyers the first day. On the second day, the marketplace is open to the public.

Exhibitors throughout the trade show showcase hundreds of creations, from handcrafted furniture to gourmet snacks. Wholesale buyers in attendance represent department stores, grocery stores, gift shops, museums, and state and national park stores across the region.

The marketplace is strategically timed to connect exhibitors with wholesale buyers looking to purchase for the spring and summer seasons.

"Montana artisans, microbrewers and vintners also showcase their products," said marketplace coordinator Paul Lloyd-Davies.

As an added incentive, exhibitors who submit a complete application for the marketplace by Dec. 7, save \$50 on the price of a booth. Registration may be completed online at www.madeinmontanamarketplace.com

The Montana Department of Commerce and the Montana Department of Agriculture started the original Made in Montana Food and Gift Show in 1998. In 2004, funding for the show was cut.

The administration of Gov. Brian Schweitzer restored funding to help sponsor the rebirth of the show in 2005. In 2006, the City of Great Falls assumed production of the show and renamed it the Made in Montana Marketplace.

The Department of Commerce remains a primary partner and sponsor of the marketplace. The Department of Agriculture and Montana Arts Council are contributing partners.

For more information on exhibitor and wholesale buyer registration, or to become a sponsor, call 406-455-8510. Follow marketplace activities on Facebook at www.facebook.com/madeinmontanamarketplace.com or visit www.madeinmontanamarketplace.com.